

## **1997-1998 BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS PROGRAM**

Name of Principal: Mr. Lewis Frohlich

Name of School: Midwood High School At Brooklyn College

Address: Bedford Avenue and Glenwood Road  
Brooklyn, New York 11210

Telephone No.: (718) 487-7000  
(718) 487-7010

Fax No.: (718) 487-7015

## PART III - SUMMARY

---

Midwood High School at Brooklyn College, a secondary school of 4,000 students located in Brooklyn, New York, is situated in a middle class, urban environment. We have created a school of academic excellence within an integrated instructional setting. The student population consists of 43% African American students, 10% Latino students, 17% Asian students and 30% other. Students wishing to attend Midwood High School may apply to one of three programs. The three programs are: Medical Science Institute, Humanities Program and Collegiate Program.

The Medical Science Institute provides students with a challenging sequence of courses focusing on science and mathematics. Students are required to complete five years of science and four years of mathematics. Three years of a foreign language and four years each of English and social studies are also required. This program is offered to students who reside within the five boroughs of New York City.

The Humanities Program concentrates on English, social studies and foreign languages. Students are required to complete five years of English, five years of social studies, and two years of Latin, as well as three years of a modern foreign language. Three years each of Regents-level science and mathematics are also required. This program is offered to students who reside within the five boroughs of New York City.

The Collegiate Program is a college preparatory program which offers students academic and career options. This program is for students who reside in the Midwood zone. Students are encouraged to work toward a Regents endorsed diploma. They are required to take four years of English, four years of social studies, three years of laboratory-based science and three years mathematics. Eligible students are given the opportunity to enter the Medical Science Institute or the Humanities Program.

During the 1986-87 school year, Midwood High School was named a School of Excellence by the United States Department of Education. In 1994, Midwood was also selected by Redbook Magazine as one of America's fifty outstanding high schools. Of the 1997 graduating class:

- Ninety-eight percent went on to college
- Over 70% earned Regents endorsed diplomas
- SAT mean scores were significantly above the national mean
- The school was rated in the top fifty high schools in America by the College Board Advanced Placement Program
- Students were awarded \$28 million in college scholarships
- For the fourth year in a row Midwood ranked among the ten top schools in the nation in the Westinghouse Research Competition
- Sixty-four students were ranked Advanced Placement scholars by the College Board
- Two Midwood seniors were selected as National Merit finalists
- Ten Midwood students received commended status in the 1997 Achievement Program
- The National Council of Teachers Of English presented a writing achievement award to a Midwood senior -- the tenth year in a row that this prestigious award was presented to Midwood High School

- In the New York Academy of Science 1997 Science and Technology Expo, eight Midwood students received awards
- Ten students received awards in a science competition sponsored by Rockefeller University

Students at Midwood High School are enriched in various ways by the academic and physical resources of Brooklyn College:

- They are encouraged to enroll in courses at the college campus, if qualified
- They have the opportunity to use the college library
- They may participate in appropriate college cultural and career programs
- They may do research under the tutelage of college professors
- They may take Midwood High School laboratory classes on the college campus
- They may hear distinguished scholars from the college who visit Midwood as guest lecturers

Midwood High School has an extensive program of extracurricular, cocurricular and athletic activities. In fact, we have won citywide championships in a variety of sports for each of the past five years. Among the major student activities are: SING (fifty consecutive years), Holiday Concerts, Spring Concerts, Black Heritage Alliance -- Black History Month celebrations, Kwanza celebrations, Model Congress (twenty-six consecutive years), Debate Team, Mock Trial Team, Moot Court Competitions, Stock Market Games, Drama Productions, Asian New Year celebrations, International Festivals, Prom, Boosters, Twirlers, Cheerleaders, Clubs, Archon Service Society, Arista Honor Society, ARGUS School Newspaper, Newman Club, Akiva Jewish Culture, Islamic Society, Unidos Hispanic Society, Student Government, Haitian Culture Club and thirty-four Varsity and Junior Varsity Sport Teams. Students are actively encouraged to participate in these activities. At Midwood there is an extracurricular activity for each student throughout the school year.

## **PART IV - VISION STATEMENT**

---

Midwood High School at Brooklyn College is a four-year comprehensive high school which has had a longstanding tradition of academic excellence and community service. The three houses which constitute the school's instructional program, the Medical Science Institute, the Humanities Program and the Collegiate Program prepare all students for Regents diplomas and college study. Equally important is the goal to instill in all students the Midwood Core Values--RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and HONESTY. We encourage our students to grow in mind and body and challenge them to serve the community when they depart.

The student population of Midwood High School reflects our urban community, and we instill in our students an appreciation of diverse ethnic and cultural heritages. Our goal is to have students be better able to function in a multi-cultural society with a respect for human diversity.

As the campus school of Brooklyn College, Midwood High School offers its students a unique and enriched college preparatory curriculum. Midwood students have the opportunity to utilize Brooklyn College resources and facilities, including library, laboratories, theater, recreational facilities, tutorial services, research mentors, and guest lecturers from the college faculty.

As we approach the 21st Century, cooperative learning, socialized recitation and other forms of student classroom interaction are replacing the developmental lesson as the key element of classroom instruction. Every student will play an active part in the classroom setting. The extracurricular life of the school is being expanded so that the entire student body can take part in after-school activities.

We recognize that technology and the advent of the Internet represent both a challenge to and opportunity for an expansion of the educational excellence that Midwood has come to represent. We are committed to being in the forefront of the technology revolution. All classrooms in the school are being wired for the Internet. With the assistance of a competitively awarded Goals 2000 grant, we are integrating technology into the school's instructional program.

Midwood High School's instructional plan is structured to educate the total student. Our resources are used to develop individual plans of study, extracurricular opportunities and an athletic program which nurture young adults to assume the many challenges of post adolescent life. Countless academic electives, a comprehensive music program, and thirty-four athletic teams further enable our students to experience the best of a comprehensive secondary education.

The faculty, parents, and students of Midwood respect the traditions of the past, accept the opportunities of the present and look to meet the challenges of the future in their mission of educational excellence.

## PART V - LEARNING-CENTERED SCHOOLS CRITERIA

---

### A. Student Focus and Support

#### A1. What are the goals for and needs of your students? How does your school develop and maintain awareness of student goals and needs, taking into consideration the most significant dimensions of student diversity?

Midwood High School is a comprehensive school organized into three distinctive programs: Medical Science, Humanities and Collegiate. Although each program has some uniqueness of requirements, our goals for all students are the same. We intend for each student entering Midwood to participate in the most challenging and rigorous curriculum for which he/she is capable. Our goals include all students receiving a Regents endorsed diploma, making an informed college/career choice and addressing those social and ethical issues relevant to living in an urban environment. Courses are evaluated yearly by supervisors and teachers. A faculty Accreditation Committee reviews and approves all proposed new courses with a focus on providing students with the highest level of instruction. Each pupil is interviewed four times per year by a guidance counselor in order to determine the student's goals, to develop an appropriate program and to provide career and college counseling. In addition, course selections are discussed in classes thereby making students aware of all options.

Aside from reviewing academic skills and potential, our goal is to help students become assets to society. Values are instilled through lessons in English, social studies, science and health classes. Teacher committees meet within departments and at faculty conferences, planning ways to focus students on our school's Core Values-- RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and HONESTY.

We have an obligation to instill in our student body social responsibility. This takes place through numerous activities such as voter registration, community service, food drives and student government. Classes such as Council For Unity, Leadership and Community Service, help maintain student awareness of their social responsibilities. The School Based Management/Shared-Decision Making Committee, along with the Consultative Council and Midwood Cabinet, continually review community service requirements as well as other curricular issues.

Our school encourages the faculty to remain abreast of pupils' needs and goals, to address pupils' diverse learning styles and to develop innovative instructional techniques. Alternative teaching techniques, e.g.: cooperative learning and alternative assessment (portfolios), are encouraged at faculty and department conferences. We feel students need to develop critical thinking skills. Our faculty is encouraged to challenge and develop these skills. For example, Midwood offers one of the largest Advanced Placement Programs. In terms of student participation, the College Board has listed Midwood among the top fifty schools in America in Advanced Placement courses. Our students are also given an opportunity to participate in Brooklyn College courses. We are also proud of the fact that we are the only school in New York City to receive a

variance from the Commissioner of Education authorizing us to implement locally developed portfolio questions on the Sequential Math I, Chemistry and Physics Regents Examinations.

At Midwood we encourage student socialization through an extensive extracurricular and cocurricular program. Activities such as the International Festival, Lincoln-Douglas Debates, Model Congress, are directly related to our instructional program and extend pupils' experiences in the various academic areas beyond the classroom. Through an elected Student Government Organization, over fifty clubs and teams are organized and operate throughout the school year. The members of the Student Government determine budget allocations and raise funds to support these activities. The fact that students are directing and creating their own clubs, creates a valuable and unique educational opportunity for Midwood students. The Principal and members of the administration get direct student feedback on curricular and extracurricular issues through the Student Government and Consultative Council. In addition, the Principal meets on a regular basis with the elected student Mayor and Comptroller.

**A2. How does your school determine and address the developmental needs of students as they move through your school?**

As students move from youth to adulthood, they must build career awareness, strengthen values, focus on life skills and deal with an increasingly complex society.

All students receive individual guidance interviews, as well as group sessions with licensed guidance counselors. At these sessions, counselors not only provide students with appropriate information, but they also listen to students in order to determine the needs of both individuals and groups within the school community. Counselors encourage students to become informed decision makers, to become more self-aware and to explore career and college options. Those seniors who are interested may have on-the-job experience through the Executive Internship Program and Law Internships.

Volunteerism is encouraged and facilitated through our Community Service course. This exposure to "real life" gives older students a concrete base for life choices. Some students have opted for careers based on their Community Service course experience.

Orientation sessions, where students are apprised of the various programs, requirements, and extracurricular activities, are provided for incoming students and their parents. Student handbooks which are distributed to students, feeder schools, faculty and parents, delineate requirements for the school's three programs. School goals are re-emphasized at monthly departmental and faculty meetings. Pupils are invited to give feedback during monthly Consultative Council meetings. Parents can also comment and provide feedback to the school at SBM/SDM meetings, Consultative Council meetings, Parents Association meetings and open school visiting sessions. The Parent/Teacher Association bulletin and the school newspaper also exist to provide communication regarding goals. A Conflict Resolution / Peer Negotiation Program has been created in the school as part of our on-going efforts to meet the needs of adolescents. The teachers involved in this program have been trained in Conflict Resolution skills by the staff at Columbia University and have demonstrated an

outstanding commitment to our students.

**A3. What non-academic services and programs are available to support students, and how do they relate to the student goals and needs identified in A1 and A2?**

Our school has an omnibus counseling program, consisting of ten licensed guidance counselors, a school psychologist, a social worker and School Based Support Team, that serves students at all grade levels. The guidance counselors provide a wide range of services including: educational planning, career advisement, post secondary planning, crisis intervention, and developmental counseling. Midwood High School affords students specific help by providing a health aide, and services of a part time physician. We have a substance abuse SPARK Program with a coordinator who is trained to assist students through group guidance and individual sessions. We also offer peer tutoring and faculty tutoring on a regular basis. Tutorial sessions are offered both during the school day and after school. Our Attendance Committee meets on a regular basis to address dropout prevention. We have one of the lowest dropout rates in the entire state. The pupil personnel team, consisting of guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologist, attendance teacher, attendance coordinator, conflict resolution specialists, coordinator of student activities, special education counselor, school aides and parents, work on a regular basis as a network of support for parents and students. Members of the pupil personnel team attend instructional department meetings and serve as liaisons and resource personnel. Staff and seasoned students serve as "buddies" to assist high risk students at the beginning of the school year.

The programs described above were created in recognition of students needs and school goals that were identified by the faculty, parents and Student Government. Thus, when it was observed that conflict resolution skills were needed, such a program was implemented. As the Midwood curricula grew and became more challenging, the guidance program expanded so that each student could receive individual, curricula-based counseling. The school has a fully staffed college office with a licensed counselor and staff of three. Each student receives a interview and is encouraged to apply to a variety of colleges. Parents are also invited in for a conference with the College office staff. The ExPAND College Search program is now available to Midwood students. Last year, the success of our college office was demonstrated, as 99% of our graduates were accepted into colleges; 47 students were admitted to Ivy League colleges. The total, four-year scholarship awarded to the Class of 1997 was \$28,602,546.

We believe that a strong extracurricular program is essential to academic success. Over fifty teams and clubs exist in our school and provide an opportunity for each student to participate in the student life at Midwood. Counselors often refer students to the Coordinator Of Student Activities who will then find an extracurricular activity for a student. The friendships created and social interaction encouraged by the extracurricular program have significantly enhanced the overall success of our student body.

**A4. What cocurricular activities are available for students and how do they extend the academic curriculum?**

Students are encouraged by department supervisors to participate in cocurricular activities which include the publication of seven departmental, professional journals.

In addition, school trips are arranged which are directly related to the courses of study, i.e.: visiting both Federal and State Courts, hospitals, advanced-science facilities, viewing open-heart surgery, Broadway plays, etc. Our Model Congress activity has attracted students in the metropolitan area for the past twenty-six years. Last year six elected officials participated in the Model Congress Program including members of Congress, State Legislature and City Council. Also in attendance at Model Congress was the President of the New York Board of Education and the President of the Borough of Brooklyn.

The vast majority of our students, both male and female, participate in at least one cocurricular activity throughout their high school experience. Each Fall, Midwood puts on its major musical production, SING. This activity is produced, written, choreographed, directed, staged and acted by students. It is produced over two nights and hundreds of students of all grade levels are involved. Performances are sold out both nights and are received well by all who attend. Our Music Department presents a Winter and Spring Concert each year. Participating in the concert are: a symphonic orchestra, concert band, a beginning strings group, jazz band, mixed chorus, gospel chorus and a number of soloists. Again, hundreds of students are involved in these activities which also play to sold out audiences. The Drama Workshop at the school takes center stage in the Spring with a major presentation. Last year's production was Arsenic and Old Lace. Two years ago the student production was, You Can't Take It With You. Students in the Theater Production Workshop classes are directly responsible for the lighting, staging and other aspects of the production.

We are also very proud of our school publications. ARGUS, our school newspaper, is published eight times a year and does an outstanding job covering school issues. A journalism class helps train students in reporting, editing, production and proofreading skills. EPILOG, our school yearbook, is student authored and planned. A yearbook production class helps prepare students in layout, writing and production skills. Each academic department has a publication which highlights student creativity and research. PATTERNS, an outgrowth of the creative writing class, is from the English Department, LEMMA is from the Mathematics Department, PRISM is from the Physical Science Department, INTROSPECT is from the Biological Science Department, RAPPORT is from the Foreign Language Department, and the Social Studies Department sponsors FORUM, THE LAW REVIEW, JAALS, and the MODEL CONGRESS JOURNAL.

Throughout the year, the Social Studies Department has taken the lead in encouraging extracurricular activities with a focus on citizenship. Among the activities are: election debate assemblies, voter registration drives, Mock Trial, Moot Court, Model Congress activities, presentations by attorneys and others in the criminal justice field. In addition, Islamic culture is highlighted by guest speakers who have made the Haj. With the



collaboration of Brooklyn College's Ethyle Wolfe Humanities Institute, speakers and performers of international acclaim have enhanced the instructional program. As part of this unique program, students often attend activities on the college campus.

In the Spring semester, a number of other student activities come into prominence. The International Festival is held in late Spring. It is a celebration of the different racial and ethnic groups which make our school special. The participants are treated to a day of ethnic entertainment and cuisine. The Asia Society sponsors an annual Chinese New Year's luncheon. The Black Heritage Alliance sponsors a comprehensive celebration of Black History Month. Also in the Spring, the English Department sponsors a Debate Team that competes in the citywide Lincoln-Douglas Debate competition. The debate class helps prepare potential team members. Last year the Debate Team competed in the citywide finals of this prestigious program and was written up in THE NEW YORK TIMES.

Of course, these activities are all supplementary to our extensive sports program, which fields thirty-four Varsity and Junior Varsity teams--twenty male teams and fourteen female teams. Over the past two years city championships have been won by the lacrosse, boys' volleyball and girls' tennis teams.

**A5. How has your school demonstrated a commitment to addressing the accessibility of its facilities and programs to students with disabilities?**

All students are encouraged to participate in every aspect of the Midwood school experience. Special Education students are mainstreamed in accordance with their I.E.P.s into a rigorous academic program. Students who wish to take part in sports programs but have a disability, are encouraged to serve as team trainers, managers and officials. The school has a clear commitment to meeting the needs of all students with disabilities. Alternate testing and untimed testing procedures are available to students. Students in need of one-on-one student assistance are provided with such staff support.

When a student was unable to copy board notes, a program was developed which permitted that student to receive all of the notes that were provided by teachers.

**B. Challenging Standards and Curriculum**

**B1. How does your curriculum serve the broad goals for student learning and development that the public generally expects education to achieve: personal and intellectual growth, citizenship, and preparation for work? What relative emphasis do you place on these goals in your curriculum?**

Values education has received increasing attention from the public we serve. Midwood High School has sought to address this goal by stressing three Core Values that transcend the curriculum. RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and HONESTY are infused into lessons and guidance conferences throughout the school year. We have sought to increase our efforts to prepare students for responsible citizenship. The Social Studies Department has been in the forefront in this venue. Examples can be seen in:

- Courses: Government, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, American History, Global Studies and Economics
- Cocurricular activities: Model Congress, Mock Trial team competition, Moot

Court team competition, Presidential and Mayoral Debate Assemblies, Mentor Internships with the law office of Wall Street law firm Sullivan and Cromwell, and a student journal called the MIDWOOD LAW REVIEW.

In addition, students are taken on trips to penal institutes and both Federal and State Courts. Last year, Midwood had the largest delegation of students from New York State attending the Presidential Inaugural Program sponsored by the Close-Up Foundation. In regard to participation in community affairs, Midwood is proud of the community service course that it offers as an elective. Scores of students have worked in hospitals, soup kitchens, elementary schools, social agencies, etc.

Another public expectation is intellectual growth and a demanding curricula. Our school's college preparatory agenda features Advanced Placement courses in English, mathematics, science, social studies and foreign language. In terms of student participation, the College Board rated the Midwood Advanced Placement Program as one of the fifty largest in the nation. We are involved as the Campus School at Brooklyn College which affords high school students the opportunity to enroll in college courses and to use college facilities. Our textbooks are constantly being reviewed and are purchased with participation by both faculty and administration. We place emphasis on acquiring text that are challenging and up-to-date.

We have made a commitment to focus on bringing technology, computers and the Internet into the classroom to enhance the learning expectations of our students and parents. Internet accessibility is available in the library and we anticipate that it will soon be available throughout the building.

**B2. Successful schools offer all students opportunities to engage with significant content. How does your school ensure that students achieve at high levels in the core subjects?**

The New York Regents curricula is in effect for all students. In addition, we offer an extensive Advanced Placement and elective program. We are particularly proud of the fact that last year's data indicated that at least ninety percent of Midwood High School students met the state wide examination requirements as outlined by the Commissioner.

The English Department works closely with the Social Studies Department in offering an interdisciplinary instructional approach. In ninth grade, where social studies classes are studying the geography, culture and politics of regions in the Middle East, Far East, Africa and Latin America, English classes are reading literature that focuses on the values and cultures of these societies. As students in the tenth grade study the development of European culture, English classes focus on European literature such as, mythology and the ODYSSEY, Chaucer and Shakespeare, the French Revolution with A TALE OF TWO CITIES and finally, the 20th Century horrors of war through ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT and NIGHT. In the eleventh and twelfth grade, students are offered a choice of American Literature, World Literature, Existentialism or alternative selectives such as Creative Writing, Journalism and Drama.

In addition, there are a number of elective offerings that vary from film, Medieval Literature, Literature of New York, Women's Literature, Debate, etc. These classes are created by department members and best utilize their expertise. All classes of English must include the four strands -- reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, as well as the New English Language Arts Standards. The curriculum demands that each lesson, each exam and all assignments should address these strands. Our curriculum is most unique in that we allow students many options, yet we never overlook basic skills necessary for students to achieve full intellectual growth.

All pupils at Midwood study a second language. The following courses are offered at Midwood: French and Spanish, levels I through Advanced Placement; Italian, levels I and II; Latin, levels I through III. Honors classes are offered in French and Spanish, levels II through IV. All Humanities students study both a modern language and a minimum of two years of Latin. Humanities and Medical Science students must complete three years of a foreign language and take the New York State Regents Examination in the language under study. Collegiate students are also encouraged to continue beyond the one year local diploma requirement in foreign languages. Foreign language teachers employ the communicative approach to teaching. Teachers implement a variety of techniques daily including, cooperative learning and present a variety of activities which promote the development and integration of all four language acquisition skills. Teachers also employ a variety of questioning techniques designed both to test comprehension of content and to promote development of critical thinking skills. In addition to grammar and thematic vocabulary, cultural themes afford an appreciation for content integration. (e.g.: solving mathematical equations in Spanish). Pupils' diverse learning styles are addressed via the infusion of alternative and portfolio assessment strategies into all courses of study.

In Science, incoming Freshman take part in a laboratory-based, hands-on Biology course of study culminating in a New York State Regents Examination. Sophomores are offered Regents-level courses in Chemistry and Earth Science. We are particularly proud of the fact that we offer thirteen sections of Physics. Advanced Placement courses are offered in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Science and Psychology. A range of electives are offered throughout the science curriculum including Medical Issues, Psychobiology, Environmental Science, Astronomy, Science & Technology and Research Methods. Critical thinking and analytical skills are addressed throughout the science curriculum in laboratory courses, daily homework assignments and classroom activities. Written portfolio projects and research papers are produced as well.

Midwood has several unique science programs including Medical Science Program, Pre-Engineering and Westinghouse Science Research Program. In addition, bilingual Haitian-Creole and all ESL classes are offered a parallel science curriculum. Medical Science students take Biology in ninth grade and move through Chemistry, Physics and Advanced Placement Science classes. In addition, students take science electives in

order to meet the extensive requirements of the program in both the physical and biological sciences. Students have the opportunity to further expand their science horizons by participating in the Westinghouse Science Research Program and by being exposed to research methodology beginning in ninth grade. Those students participate in active research at universities, graduate schools and in other clinical settings under the guidance of mentors, culminating in the production of a Westinghouse Science Research paper. Last year eighty such research papers were produced.

The Mathematics Department combines the required New York State curriculum with Advanced Placement electives. After the completion of Regents-level courses in Sequential Math Courses I, II and III, students have the opportunity to take classes in Pre-calculus, Calculus, Advanced Placement Calculus AB, Advanced Placement Calculus BC, Advanced Placement Statistics. In addition, we offer a unique, accelerated math course which integrates Sequential Math Course III with Pre-calculus.

We also included classes that prepare students for Math Team competitions, and an introductory computer BASIC course. Reading, writing and problem solving are integral parts of all math courses throughout the department. Students are taught to analyze, decode, explain and solve problems.

Our community has been a continuously changing one. As educators, our job is to help improve society. In these changing times, a school's curriculum must lend itself to the social needs of the community. We are designing our curriculum with the needs and interests of the students in mind. Our curriculum is developed by teachers and supervisors with the input of students and parents. Midwood's vision in cultural education is to provide the environment for students to learn to respect what people have been able to create and what they will be able to create.

Our sense of community depends on establishing linkages across our many ethnic and racial differences. Music and art are splendid connectors between different peoples and cultures. Music and art can help to lift the veil of ignorance that sometimes stands between people who differ in race, ethnicity, religion, economic well-being and life style. If we accept the music and art of others and have some understanding of it, we have established a way to relate. Music and art education help students to cross boundaries and obliterate the walls of prejudice, hostility and misunderstanding that persist among individuals in our society. Our program attempts to develop in students a sense of self-esteem, self-worth, self-respect, self-confidence, and the belief that one can succeed. Cultural education is a fine motivator of our students.

**B3. What other content areas play essential roles in your school wide curriculum goals?**

Technology and the Health and Physical Education Departments play key roles in achieving school wide curricular goals. We have incorporated technology in our school library and now provide Internet access for students. The card catalogue has been eliminated and a computerized library database has been created. Hundreds of students use the library on a daily basis. In addition, in our Media Center, computers are

available for student use. The ExPAND, college application/scholarship search program, is available in the Media Center and College Office and will soon be available on our school wide, local area network. We plan to bring the Internet to all classes at Midwood.

The Physical Education Department also plays a key role in the education of Midwood students. Freshmen are given an elective in Health focusing on key health-related issues that affect all teenagers, i.e.: substance abuse, AIDS, smoking, nutrition, etc. Our coaches instill within the student athletes an understanding of the Midwood Core Values--RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and HONESTY.

**B4. What are your course requirements for graduation? To what extent do your school and students within the school exceed minimum state and/or district requirements?**

Subjects	State Requirements	District Requirements	School Requirements Same as District	% 1997 Grads Who Exceed School Requirements
English	4 years	4 years	4 years	39%
Mathematics	2 years	3 years	3 years	79%
Science	2 years	3 years	3 years	74%
Social Studies	4 years	4 years	4 years	51%
Foreign Language	1 year	1 year	1 year	93%
The Arts	1 year	1 year	1 year	35%
Physical Ed.	4 years	4 years	4 years	--
Voc/Technical	--	--	--	23%
Computer Ed	--	--	--	23%

**B5. What is the process for continuing curriculum renewal at your school? What questions about curriculum is your school currently addressing?**

In social studies, the course that best emphasizes content improvement is the European History Advanced Placement course. During the past two years, academic results were disappointing. We changed teachers. The new teacher has had many years teaching experience in European History and has traveled extensively in Europe and is fluent in German. The course syllabus was also revised. New books were purchased. The new teacher and his supervisor were involved in these activities. The teacher attended Advanced Placement orientation sessions and was able to enhance student preparation for the Advanced Placement Examination. Indeed, the scores on the May 1997 European History Advanced Placement Examination were the highest ever in our school for this subject.

In English, courses are reviewed by the Chairman who decides which courses need to be renewed or revised. The Chairman interfaces with department curriculum committees to further review and implement changes. Final drafts are reviewed by the school wide Accreditation Committee for approval. Presently, we are infusing technology into the curriculum and pedagogy of each domain. Humanities courses have undergone extensive improvement. Over the past several years, teachers have become more familiar with non-western literature. English teachers have attended conferences at Asian Society, Japan Society, have attended Arab League Arts Conferences and have attained NEH grants allowing summer studies in such places as University of Colorado and Harvard. Their newly found expertise has been instrumental in introducing new literature such as *Bochan*, *Princess and Train to Pakistan*, and new approaches in bringing students to a greater understanding of non-western cultures.

Although we offer an extensive science program, a departmental committee was established to review science offerings. The committee was given the challenge of determining whether new courses should be added to our curricula. Based upon the work of these teachers a recommendation was made to add a new science Advanced Placement elective in environmental science. Students responded enthusiastically to this initiative. Sixty eight students signed up for this elective. A similar process took place in mathematics with the introduction of the Advanced Placement statistics course.

In foreign language, the Honors sequence begins with the second year, fourth term. The Spanish 4H curriculum was changed in order to provide a challenging, stimulating course of study which would encourage students to achieve at high levels. This task was carried out thus: A committee of teachers, headed by a grade leader, was assigned to revise the existing Spanish 4 course of study. The teachers adapted the course of study to include new textbooks and supplementary materials. Revised pedagogical techniques including alternative assessment strategies were developed. Teachers also decided to require a final project, an illustrated book which integrates grammatical functions, thematic vocabulary and cultural themes studied throughout the year. Thus, The Fairy Tale Project was developed. Working in cooperative learning groups, pupils either re-write, illustrate and present an existing fairy/folk tale or create an original fairy/folk tale. These projects have been put on display at both the Brooklyn Superintendent's Office and in the lobby at Midwood High School. Before formally adopting the new curriculum, teachers piloted and fine-tuned the curriculum. Both teachers and students have reacted favorably to the curriculum. Students eagerly anticipated completion of the final project. As with all courses in the department, teachers provide feedback and suggestions for further revision at the conclusion of each semester. The course was then submitted by the teachers and department Chairperson to the Accreditation Committee and Principal for review and approval. All curriculum renewal is conducted in the same manner.

- B6. How do you ensure that diverse learners (e.g., students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, limited English proficient students, migrant students, and**

**students placed at risk) all have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels?**

A high level, challenging curricula has been established for all students. Students with special needs are provided with support services (speech, untimed testing, resource room, counseling) while they continue in demanding academic classes. All students are encouraged to take a full range of Regents-level courses, i.e.: LEP students take Regents-level courses in science, mathematics, social studies, and language. The Haitian-Creole Bilingual Program encourages students to take demanding and rigorous courses in all disciplines. Students who have been identified as high risk are provided with appropriate support programs and services such as intensive counseling, daily report to parents, early-morning wake-up calls and Project Escort. Students are also offered after-school tutoring and a peer-assisted tutorial program. Gifted and talented students are assigned Advanced Placement and Brooklyn College courses. Midwood High School was listed by the College Board as being in the top fifty schools in America in terms of student participation in Advanced Placement courses.

We are proud of the fact that our Special Education students have all earned regular diplomas, and have passed all required New York State Regents Competency Tests. In fact, we have not issued I.E.P. endorsed diplomas for the past seven years.

## **C. Active Teaching and Learning**

### **C1. For three core subjects discussed in B, what are the prevalent teaching practices and learning experiences in your school?**

Foreign language teachers implement collaborative activities, cooperative learning, and total physical response which promote the development of all four language acquisition skills and also produce pupils who are active participants in the learning process. Alternative assessments including portfolio projects are implemented in all foreign languages, ESL and Native Language Arts (Haitian-Creole) courses. The aforementioned teaching and assessment strategies also address different learning styles (e.g. kinetic, visual) while tapping pupils' creativity, promoting the development of critical thinking skills and affording pupils an opportunity to acquire proficiency in foreign languages, English and Native Language Arts (Haitian-Creole).

In the Midwood Humanities Program, teachers have utilized a host of successful pedagogical practices. These practices have provided effective learning experiences to students via their English, social studies, art and music classes. An example can be seen via the ways in which literature, analyzed in English classes, conforms to the specific historical and cultural content taught in social studies. Students have successfully analyzed foreign cultures in depth by seeing the links between literature, history and geography. Other practices include group reports, newspaper research projects, acting out short stories, creating maps and other visual displays. We also wish to note that all the Humanities classes have been brought together for unique learning sessions. Two examples can be cited which occurred on the Brooklyn College campus during the 1996-97 school year:

- On one occasion, a renowned musician skilled in Arab music gave a lecture/demonstration for over two hundred Humanities students. This demonstration enhanced students' learning about the culture of the Middle East.
- On another occasion, in order to focus on Korea, our faculty organized with Brooklyn College personnel, a whole day's activities which featured a group of Korean musicians and a lecture on political tensions on the Korean peninsula.

These two examples of high school/college articulation have been of great import for our students and have been welcomed by their parents.

The Science Departments at Midwood High School employ a variety of teaching techniques. Science teachers implement laboratory experiments in all Regents-level science classes culminating in the production of laboratory reports and focusing on functional reading. All teachers include hands-on activities in all classes, as well as cooperative learning activities on a regular basis. Appropriate questioning techniques are employed in daily instruction in order to encourage critical thinking skills. Problem solving techniques are employed and students are required to complete projects through group interaction culminating in presentations and research projects. Portfolio projects are also assigned in all Regents-level classes. Science teachers focus on developing critical skills in all students.

**C2. Using the three courses from C1, why are the practices/experiences appropriate for your students?**

The aforementioned practices and experiences address the needs and goals of pupils of all levels of ability (e.g. Honors, ESL, Bilingual) in both the general and special education population. These pedagogical practices also meet the goals of the instructional program in foreign languages and ESL. We have found that students learn best and achieve at higher levels via cooperative learning, project based learning, and the total physical response approach.

The Humanities Program is clearly appropriate for our students. The chief reason rests in the fact that the New York City milieu is such a vast cosmopolitan and multi-cultural setting. For our youngsters to be more sensitive to this milieu and, indeed, to prepare them for the greater global world into which they will enter as adults. The study of other cultures, from a Humanities point of view, is of the utmost essence. The Humanities Program seeks to develop knowledge, skills, empathy and a reduction of ethnocentrism. To accomplish these goals will help prepare our youngsters for their roles as responsible and caring adults.

The practices and experiences in the Science Departments directly address student needs on all levels. Throughout the high school experience, students are required to develop high-level critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. The practices mentioned above contribute to this development by addressing multiple intelligences throughout the curriculum.



**C3. In what ways do your teaching practices support student initiated learning?**

Alternative assessment strategies are implemented in all courses throughout the Language/ESL Department. Pupils individually and collectively develop projects which afford them an opportunity to both actively use the communicative skills acquired and demonstrate an appreciation for the culture of the languages studied: Latin pupils work cooperatively to produce a Roman Fair illustrating and highlighting various aspects of life in Ancient Rome; ESL pupils produce a newspaper and/or magazine highlighting their experiences in English acquisition and acculturation into American society; Spanish students work cooperatively to produce a term project in which they re-write (or create) and illustrate a folk tale or fairy tale. All students celebrate their linguistic and cultural heritage through the Language Department's annual International Festival. This festival attracts over seven hundred parents to our school on a Sunday in the Spring.

The Humanities Program encourages youngsters to engage in critical thinking and express opinions on controversial issues. Such expansion takes the form of social recitation in class, completion of research projects, simulations and group reports.

An extensive peer tutoring program encourages students to take the lead in working with other students in the mastery of instructional material. Student Government gives students an opportunity to directly take part in budgetary activities as they learn about the nature of Government. The Conflict Resolution / Peer Negotiation Instructional Program provides students with an opportunity to work with their peers in making our school a safe and secure learning center.

**C4. As students and teachers engage in active learning, how are resources made available for gathering information and sharing the results of their work?**

Our vision is to bring the resources of both our library and City University library system into our classrooms through technology. Midwood has an extensive library of over 12,000 titles. The library catalogue is automated with the Mandarin System. The catalogue is linked to a computer system so that students may determine if a particular book or periodical is available. In addition to print material, the library has ten CD-ROM computers to access electronic reference materials. Magazines and journals are available through Resource One, Academic Abstracts Full Text Elite, SIRS and Ethnic News Watch. The CD players also have Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia, Britannica, World Book, and McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology. Students can access DiscLit for literary criticism and Columbia Granger World of Poetry. We also have discs of Occupation Outlook Handbook, The American Indian, and NYCSLA PAC, which is a guide to materials in other school libraries.

We want to make library resources and the Internet available to the teacher in each classroom. We have won GOALS 2000 and Comprehensive Educational Plan grants to acquire computers and projectors which can be rolled into classrooms to be used by

teachers and students. In addition to bringing our own library services into each classroom, we have successful collaborations with local university libraries. Our students can borrow books and access data bases in the City University of New York (CUNY) Libraries through CUNY+. We are located near Brooklyn College where our faculty and students can take classes and use their library and Internet facilities. CUNY is now our Internet provider. We have a school wide WAN under construction, which will access to the Internet from every classroom.

To facilitate our vision, an Assistant Principal for Technology position was created to enable teachers to use these services in their classrooms. The administrator conducts formal and informal staff development sessions with the faculty, students and parents.

The chief resource in the building available for the Humanities students is the library. Librarians work in conjunction with faculty to acquire appropriate materials that is curricula based. In addition, through a computer and modem, students can access materials in libraries throughout the city and the CUNY system.

Student publications are important resources that reflect student work. These publications are distributed in the school and cover all the major academic disciplines. Another valuable resources is our beautiful courtroom. The courtroom is a place to hold simulated trials, to conduct meetings of Student Government, to hold debates and to engage in other activities of a large, whole-class nature. The courtroom also contains an extraordinary law library. This library consists of Supreme Court reports, New York State statutes and other material that would be found in a law school library. These materials are available for use by both students and faculty.

Midwood High School has been successful in utilizing New York City's diverse cultural and academic community as part of the school's instructional program. Particular examples are the following:

- Literature, music, tapes, posters, etc. from foreign consultants and the U.N.
- Speakers from major universities
- Representatives from the fields of Finance, Drama and the Arts
- Clergy from various religious bodies

**C5. What questions about teaching and learning has the introduction of education technologies raised in your school and how have you addressed them?**

School Based Planning Committee members raised the following questions:

- How can we encourage all students to learn to use new technology?
- How can we integrate computer technology into instruction in each classroom?
- How can we keep skills of teachers current, enabling them to work more effectively with students?

Midwood is committed to motivating and facilitating student use of our resources. We engage students in research-oriented competitions such as the Westinghouse Science Competition, Smith Barney Program and Mock Trial. All our teachers demand class

and term papers requiring independent research and annotating sources. Our library and Media Center is filled to capacity every period. Students can use the Brooklyn College library and Internet sites after Midwood closes.

To increase access to technology, we have created a media center with word processing and spreadsheet software available to students who do not have access to computers at home. We teach typing and word processing to students who need these skills. The school wide WAN will allow every classroom to access all our research data bases creating a library without walls. Our Internet connection to every classroom will create a school without walls. We discovered that none of these resources could be used without upgrading the technological knowledge base of our students and teachers. Formal staff development workshops are conducted at our monthly department meetings. A Technological Update bulletin listing Internet sites for each subject is given to all students and teachers. One-on-one instruction is available on each Internet terminal. Students teach teachers and other students to access Internet sites. We have arranged for our educational community to use Brooklyn College's computer labs to conduct research on the Web.

A second problem created by the technological explosion is upgrading and maintaining hardware and software. The expertise to run a network has become prohibitively difficult for educators trained in pedagogy or administration only. To solve this problem, we are recruiting interns majoring in computer science with the Computer Technology Departments at Brooklyn College and New York University. These interns will aid in maintaining our networks and instructing our staff, along with providing successful role models for our students.

## **D. School Organization and Culture**

### **D1. How does the culture of your school support the learning of all its members?**

Our school culture consists of a student body that is diverse with over twenty five nationalities represented in the student population. The process the school uses to engage all members in collective inquiry, reflection and responsible decision-making about their learning includes: a Student Government Organization (modeled after the New York City Government), a Consultative Council, which consists of staff, parents, and students who meet with the Principal on a regular basis, and an extensive extracurricular program which encourages students to be proud of their cultural heritage and share the same with the broader student body. We are a school-based management, shared decision-making school. Each issue that arises in the school can be discussed as part of the shared decision-making process among the administration, staff, parents and students.

Our diverse student body has representatives from almost every corner of the world.

It reflects our urban setting and includes gifted, learning disabled, limited English proficient and bilingual students. Special education students are "mainstreamed" in academic courses where appropriate and are fully integrated in Physical Education, school-sponsored activities, clubs and teams. LEP students receive high-level, Regents-

level instruction in foreign language and in mathematics, social studies and science. Bilingual students receive instruction in native language arts (Haitian-Creole) and bilingual instruction in the aforementioned content area. LEP and our bilingual students are included in foreign language classes (frequently advanced level), mathematics and social studies courses. They also have full access to extra and cocurricular offerings. A representative from each social studies class is elected to the Student Council. This body sends representatives to a Consultative Council. There, together with parents and faculty, students confer with the Principal on a monthly basis. The School-Based Management/Shared Decision-Making Team has a similar construction and mission dealing with educational issues brought forward by any constituent member. Open discussion, two-way communication and equal voting rights are hallmarks of this committee.

The nature of the teaching-learning process in our school supports learning regardless of ethnic, racial or religious background. Students have the opportunity to join culturally-oriented clubs, e.g.: the Newman Club, the Akiva Cultural Club, the Black Heritage Alliance Club, the Asian Society, the Islamic Club, Unidos Hispanic Society, etc. In addition, our annual International Festival Program enables students, parents and staff to highlight the contributions of our multi-cultural student body.

**D2. How does your school foster a caring community with engaged, sustained relationships among all its members?**

Members of the Pupil Personnel Services team meet with students, parents and staff on a regular basis. This affords the time to develop specific strategies to provide help with different concerns, i.e.: a student who is having difficulty with proportioning his or her time with regard to school work. Guidance personnel use a behavioral approach creating a plan in which the parent and student participate on a regular basis. Our school personnel utilize outside agencies for family counseling and support service activities.

Many faculty members sponsor or advise student activities. Students have the opportunity to join culturally-oriented clubs (Islamic Society, Akiva Culture Club, Newman Club, Black Heritage Alliance, Asian Society, Unidos Hispanic Society, etc.) which are open to all students regardless of ethnicity. "Crossover" membership is encouraged. Students and parents participate on school governance committees, the Accreditation Committee and Advisory Board for our Peer Mediation Program. This provides opportunities for all parts of our community to interact. Frequently, students "work" in department offices, laboratories, or for staff members. This "service" period provides an opportunity for informal exchanges and "mentoring" of students. It helps to develop inter-personal relationships. The popularity of the myriad of clubs and activities, is testimony to the positive effect they have on the lives of the students.

**a. What opportunities do students have to build sustained and caring relationships with teachers and other adults?**

Students meet with teachers before and after class, with guidance counselors on a regular basis, and with Assistant Principals and other staff members in

department offices. Staff members have been trained to provide support and meet the educational needs of students. Staff training is fostered at department meetings, faculty conferences and out-of-school workshops.

Numerous teachers serve as faculty advisors to our teams and non-athletic extracurricular activities. A strong bond develops between faculty advisors and students as the activity progresses during the school year. In addition, students are encouraged to provide service in teacher and administrators' offices. This also fosters a caring relationship between faculty and students.

**b. How does your school promote a healthy peer climate among the students?**

A few years ago, students, parents, staff and community leaders met with administrative personnel to identify specific values which would be emphasized, discussed and reinforced throughout the students' high school curricula. At Midwood High School there are three Core Values which are integrated in the curricula and in the support services on a regular basis. They are: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and HONESTY. In addition, through our extensive extracurricular and athletic program, a healthy peer climate is encouraged and maintained to reinforce these values. Specific presentations such as the International Festival, SING, musical concerts, Black Heritage Alliance Program and Asian Society Program help students become useful participants in this healthy climate. The C.O.S.A. and Student Government members do outreach activities for students who feel less than fully included in the Midwood community.

**D3. How is your school organized to reflect differing student needs within the school's goals, priorities, and curriculum?**

All students are placed into high-level academic classes to meet state and city graduation requirements. Course sections are in place where level and pace may conform to student needs, yet the content is parallel. For example, in science, required courses -- the regular, honors, research, and special education sections, all follow the same core syllabus, but adapt it to incorporate all students' needs.

Support is also available via department tutoring, one-to-one teacher tutoring, resource room for mainstreamed special education students and after-school peer tutoring.

Within Midwood, students instructional programs are organized around three thematic houses -- Humanities Institute, Medical Science Institute and Collegiate Program. Within each program, students are given a demanding curriculum including laboratory-based science, four years of English, four years of social studies, three years of science, three years of mathematics. Students are always encouraged by the guidance staff to take demanding courses of Honors and Advanced Placement courses. For the last academic year, over three hundred students were admitted into our Science Institute and an additional two hundred students were admitted into the Humanities Program.

**D4. How are teachers hired in your school? How are teacher assignments made?**

We work closely with the Superintendent's Borough Personnel Officer to recruit

teachers who will meet the needs of both the rigorous academic program and the thirst for knowledge of our student body. Continuous recruitment through collection of resumes, teacher training through our coordination of student teaching with Brooklyn College, and several other teacher education programs, help broaden our opportunities to hire the most qualified teachers. Teacher training takes place through on-going professional workshops and the sharing of staff experiences. Once teachers are hired, we identify weaknesses in their pedagogy. Teacher training then takes place on a regular basis led by both department Chairmen and senior members of the faculty.

There is intensive outreach for specialized area teachers, in particular, for our bilingual and Haitian-Creole programs. Teachers who have the qualifications for license certification in bilingual or Haitian-Creole are encouraged to become certified.

**D5. What constraints does your school face in creating a community of learners? How does your school maintain a safe, orderly, and drug-free environment?**

Our single largest constraint is space. We are an overcrowded facility with over 4,000 students in a building designed for 2,200 students. Yet, the school's philosophy and instructional approaches have helped create a safe and secure school. For the five hundred seats in the Medical Science and Humanities Program, there were over 6,000 applications. This demonstrates the community's recognition of the fact that we have created a safe and secure school.

Constraints on our ability to further our goals, or experiment with different strategies:

- Limited budget--The instructionally supplied budget is extremely limited. The student activity budget provides less than \$12,000 of a student activity budget that exceeds \$70,000
- Overcrowded conditions--4,000 students in a building rated for a capacity of 2,200
- Antiquated facilities--The building was constructed in 1940 and has not seen a major renovation since then. All three science laboratories are antiquated, and the library is far too small for the needs of our students.

The school's discipline philosophy is prevention, rather than actual punishment. Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution, SPARK counseling and Parent Involvement Programs play a key role in creating a safe and orderly environment. Our School Safety Officers are constantly visible on the floors and are involved in the formation of the annual School Safety Plan. Thus, they are involved in the formation of policies, as well as in the implementation of these policies. Deans are also assigned throughout the building to continually patrol the halls to maintain order and school tone. We also work closely with the local precinct which has assigned a full time police officer to the school vicinity. Parents also play an important role, as they are constantly called upon to become involved with the school's instructional and extracurricular programs. The school's ten licensed counselors focus group activities on values and the maintenance of a safe and orderly society within the Midwood High School community. We also encourage faculty to take part in seminars, institutes and summer programs. Last

summer, staff members took part in studies at the University of Colorado and Harvard.

## **E. Professional Community**

### **E1. What opportunities do teachers and other staff have to build professional community(ies) that enhance their collective capacity to work together to support student learning?**

At our monthly faculty conferences, we frequently call upon staff members to be facilitators in the dissemination of educational strategies that have been successful in our classrooms and school-wide programs. Turnkey coordinators are developed through school committee meetings, Superintendent workshops and through attending citywide workshops. Teachers in interdisciplinary programs work together to enhance the strengths of the departments involved. In so doing, they report frequently at Faculty Conferences and Cabinet Meetings. There are several faculty committees such as the mentoring, SBM/SDM, Attendance and Accreditation Committees which meet to determine staff needs and to share student and staff successes. These committees make recommendations to the Principal on ways to improve student learning.

### **E2. How does a coherent approach to professional development for teachers and other staff ensure their ongoing learning? How do organizational arrangements such as time and teaching assignment, and school norms and culture make professional development a priority? Is there a long-term plan?**

Professional development is an on-going activity . Mentoring is provided to all new teachers. "Buddy" teachers are assigned by the Assistant Principals to aid younger members of their department. An extensive program of intervisitation takes place, which encourages teachers to observe and discuss instructional strategies and approaches. Each month teachers attend a faculty conference and a departmental conference which focus on the improvement of instruction. Each probationary teacher receives five, full-period observations by an Assistant Principal and at least one by the Principal. These observations are followed by a full-period discussion of the lesson and a written report. All other staff members receive at least one, full-period supervisory evaluation and a written report. Members of the English Department have served as turnkey trainers leading discussions on the development of writing, reading and listening skills for each of the other academic departments.

### **E3. How does the school tailor professional development and support to take account of differences in career experience or professional responsibility?**

Faculty members are encouraged by the school to enhance their professional skills. Examples can be seen via the increasing number of grant opportunities in which staff members participated. During the summer of 1997, Midwood teachers enhanced their professional development by winning grants to study in such places as the University of Colorado, Mount Holyoke, Harvard University, C.U.N.Y. Two teachers pursued individual work in the Humanities through the receipt of a grant from the National Endowment For The Humanities. Teachers who have won these grants have been eager to share their scholarship with their colleagues. Indeed, several teachers acted as turnkeys, demonstrating lessons and sharing materials that were acquired from their out-of-school study experiences. The social studies Chairman, for example, gives six in-service courses each year for teachers from Midwood and all New York City schools

on various aspects of Asian cultures.

New teachers are provided with experienced support. They are assigned "buddy" teachers who teach similar subjects and have common professional points. New teachers are observed frequently by the Principal and department Chairs. These teachers also attend workshops for which they receive new-teacher credit.

**E4. How does your school use the processes and results of student assessment, staff evaluation, and school review to support professional growth? How has teacher professional development improved teaching?**

Student assessment takes place via review of grades, teacher recommendations, guidance department analyses and review of external exams namely, New York State Regents Examinations and Advanced Placement examinations. When necessary, teachers undertake specific course review assignments. These assignments take place when data indicates a need for improvement and change. This has been most recently true in the English and social studies departments. Several opportunities exist for teachers to obtain feedback on their own professional performance. Observation reports are written by department Chairs as a consequence of observed lessons. Frequently, teachers and supervisors meet to co-plan a lesson. Teachers can have themselves video taped while they teach. In some departments, teachers tape their lessons, which can later be reviewed by the teacher and/or their supervisor.

Many teachers, especially in the science departments, have attended graduate and in-service courses on portfolios and alternative assessments. As a result, these have been inserted into the requirements of courses. We have even obtained variances, which now permit direct point credit on state Regents Examinations for portfolio work. School examinations now reflect increased alternative assessment such as lab tests, oral tests and reports and group projects.

Recognition for excellence in teaching is reflected in an annual award presented to a member of the staff. In addition, Midwood faculty members have been nominated for and have received local, city and state awards for their teaching performance. Mark Willner, Midwood's Social Studies Chairman, was awarded New York State's highest educational award, the **Yavner** Award, by the Commissioner of Education.

**F. Leadership and Educational Vitality**

**F1. How does leadership move your school toward its vision? How is the instructional leadership role defined and implemented? What other leadership roles are considered important and how are these defined and carried out? How are resources aligned with goals?**

At Midwood, the Principal together with the Assistant Principals have agreed upon a shared vision which is outlined in the **Vision Statement** in Section IV. Monthly meetings of the Principal's Cabinet are held in which the school's vision is reviewed and progress towards implementing the agreed upon goals and objectives are discussed. The creation of a Humanities Interdisciplinary Program was a direct result of both our vision and the leadership roles played by our Assistant Principals in the English and



social studies departments. The creation of a two year Westinghouse Research Social Science Elective Program came after a series of discussions amongst school leaders and students. These discussions looked to the school's vision and its instructional program and led to the realization that a new Social Science Research Program would move our students in a positive instructional direction. Once the Humanities Program and the Social Science Research Program were adopted as instructional courses, resources were aligned with them. Funds were allocated by the Principal for sufficient instructional time. After a discussion with teachers, the school secured funding for a student summer institute in science and social science research. Funding was made available through the alignment of our vision with the Superintendent's instructional goals for the district.

In Humanities, twenty six instructional periods were allocated to a Freshman and Sophomore Program. Appropriate textbook funds were allocated by the Principal to the Chairmen of English, social studies and music for the Humanities Program.

**F2. Who participates in the leadership of your school? How does the school engage its internal and external stakeholders in leadership and decision making? What is the relationship between the principal and stakeholders?**

Through regular meetings with the SBM/SDM Committee which consists of administration, teachers, parents, students and other school personnel, the Principal shares the concerns, issues and initiatives of the Midwood High School community with the committee. In addition to the collaborative efforts and policy making through the SBM/SDM committee, the Principal confers with the Parents' Association, Consultative Council, representatives of the Student Government, community leaders and staff, all of whom play an integral role in formulating the school's vision, goals and priorities. Budgetary decisions, staff needs, pending renovations, physical environment are issues that the Principal has brought forth. Among the external stakeholders with whom regular discussions take place are elected and appointed office holders on the local, state and federal levels, police precinct captains, clergy and business leaders.

**F3. What kind of school improvement process is in operation at your school? How was the Self-Assessment for the Blue Ribbon Schools Program developed and how did this initiative relate to other school improvement and planning**

Midwood High School is integrating all our resources to accomplish our vision. We are moving toward interdisciplinary study and consulting both parent and students to improve our school. New courses are created through the collaborative efforts of teachers and Assistant Principals. Many elective courses are suggested by students. Technology was upgraded with the assistance of our district Superintendent, Alumni and Parent Organizations. These improvements reflect an "open door" policy established by the administration of the school.

This Blue Ribbon SRP was created in a similar manner. The self-assessment process was accomplished through consulting various committees, Assistant Principals, key staff members, student leaders and parent organizations. The Principal facilitated this process by creating time for these groups to meet. Final editing was a collaboration by

the Principal, Assistant Principal of English, Assistant Principal of social studies, SBM/SDM chairperson and student elected Mayor.

**F4. How does your school leadership use the most current information about education to promote continuous improvement in your school? How does such evidence influence decision-making?**

As the state implements the new learning standards and new Regents Examinations, the Principal has designed a plan to incorporate these changes and raise our school standards. This school is at the forefront of such changes, since many of the Assistant Principals serve in leadership roles in their professional organizations. Last year our Health & Physical Education Assistant Principal served as the lead Assistant Principal in the Brooklyn High School District. Our math and language assistant principals have worked for the past two years to assist a neighboring SURR school. The Principal distributes information on current educational trends and policies to the Cabinet, SBM/SDM Committee, Parents' Association, Consultative Council and faculty. This material is further discussed at Department and Faculty Conferences. Interdisciplinary department conferences have allowed for a sharing of current practices and an integration of new standards across the curriculum.

**F5. What is your vision for integrating technology into your school, including benchmarks that guide your plans, problems that must be overcome, and training approaches? To what extent and how is technology used to improve management efficiency and effectiveness?**

Midwood High School has adopted a unique vision for technology. In addition to having computer labs, we envision infusing technology into classroom lessons. We have a wide-area network which has RJ45 plugs in every room. These connect to a server in the library which can distribute CD-ROMs, library data bases, network programs, and Internet access. This server is connected to the City University of New York's server. We are able to use them as an Internet provider. We hope to have this school wide local area network in operation by May 1998.

Using this technology requires teachers to be trained in managing computers, CD-ROM's, LED projectors, scanners and Internet. To fill this need, we have collaborated with Brooklyn College's computer center and the American Social History Project in a GOALS 2000 grant. Next Spring we hope to continue this grant with the Media Workshop guiding more of our teachers to use technology in their classrooms. We are aggressively pursuing other grants to implement staff development. Hardware to provide Internet access in each classroom has been paid for by our district, School Construction Authority, Parents' Association, and Alumni Fund. We are pursuing internship programs from nearby universities to bring in people who can help administrate our LAN. A position of Assistant Principal for Organization for Technology was created and funded to facilitate our vision of a "school without walls".

**F6. As you look back over the last five years, what conditions and/or changes have contributed most to the overall success of your school?**

Over the past five years, four items stand out as contributing to the success of

## Midwood

- The supervisory staff and Cabinet were recreated with active parental and student input. Six new Assistant Principals were appointed (Language, Health Education, Technology, Biology, Guidance and Administration).
- The Midwood curricula was expanded with the addition of a Social Science Research Program, Interdisciplinary Humanities Program, expanded music electives, the addition of new Advanced Placement courses and expansion of second language opportunities for students (Latin and Italian).
- A positive school climate was created from the active involvement of both faculty and students in the decision-making process. SBM/SDM has contributed to the overall success of Midwood.
- The extracurricular life of the school has been significantly expanded. Students now have the option of over fifty clubs and teams that meet on a regular basis.

It is our strong belief that the involvement of students in extracurricular activities, directly contributes to the overall success of the school.

### **F7. What do you consider the major educational challenges your school must face over the next five years and how do you plan to address them?**

Over the last five years, we have seen three major educational challenges facing the Midwood faculty and study body.

- Technology must be introduced across the curricula. Teachers and students need training on the Internet. A computer literate faculty and student body are necessary as we enter the 21st Century.
- The implementation of the new English Language Arts as well as the higher academic standards in other disciplines, represent the second challenge we face. All students must be prepared to meet significantly higher academic standards than were expected in the decade of the 1980s.
- The third challenge facing our school is the active recruitment of highly-skilled and dedicated staff members. Our society needs and the school has an obligation to find teachers committed to the youth of America.

## **G. School, Family, and Community Partnerships**

### **G1. What are the goals and priorities of your school, family, and community partnership? How have your school and community improved as a result of these partnerships and how did you measure the improvements?**

As an SBM/SDM school, goals and priorities are established through active consultation with faculty, students and parents. Please see our Vision Statement for the goals and priorities established. The Midwood Core Values--RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and HONESTY, were established through active partnership with parents and students. It is our belief that the school has moved through the process of bringing all shareholders in the decision-making process, and input has broadened our view of both curriculum and student-centered issues.

### **G2. How does your school involve families in their children's educations?**

On an on-going basis, Midwood attempts to involve parents in their children's education. Project Escort invites parents to sit in our classes and accompany their

children to all classes. This has proved to be particularly effective for at risk students.

Parent Involvement courses have been established in both science and math. Parents are taught sections of the curriculum in an effort to create a parental tutoring program.

We have also taken parents and their children to local museums and cultural events in an effort to improve and broaden the academic and social base of our school community. On-going parent conferences with guidance counselors help to ensure that parents have input in their children's educational planning and an understanding of the school's curriculum and instructional goals. An extensive Post-Secondary Educational Program provides parents with extensive information concerning college options for their children. Both the Parents' Association and Alumni Association, play an active role in the school. The school has set up workshops and seminars for the Parents' Association members dealing with a range of guidance issues including: study skills, post-secondary planning, diploma requirements, financial aid and scholarship information, issues related to secondary school adjustment, conflicts between parents and their children and health-related issues.

**G3. How does the school support the needs and concerns of families?**

The Midwood guidance staff has an extensive network of contacts with local hospital and social services agencies. Appropriate referrals are made and followed up by the guidance counselors. The school's Health Aide, working with the school Doctor, deals with issues related to health concerns and HIV/AIDS. Evening parent meetings are held, as well as weekend meetings. In September, the Parents' Association "Breakfast with the Principal" attracted over three hundred parents to the school. In June, the Freshman Orientation Meeting saw over one thousand parents taking part in a dialogue with school officials. College Night saw over fifteen hundred parents spend an evening at Midwood to discuss college opportunities with over one hundred sixty college representatives. Tours of our building during the year are open to the parents of perspective students. Parents are given the opportunity to see Midwood in action-filled classes and have free-range discussions with members of the student body.

**G4. How does your school collaborate with community members and organizations for the benefit of families, students and the school? From a reciprocal perspective, how do school-community partnerships benefit the community?**

In conjunction with Brooklyn College, an extensive series of collaborative programs have been established. The Ethyle Wolfe Institute and our Humanities Program had two collaborative efforts this past year. As described in **C1**, each term a number of student teachers from Brooklyn College are assigned in various disciplines at Midwood High School. In conjunction with the Education Department at Brooklyn College, Midwood students were trained in tutoring and teaching skills by Brooklyn College professors and then were assigned to Public School 152, our neighboring elementary school, as tutors and teacher assistants. Brooklyn College has also opened up their writing workshops for our students in need.

**G5. How are educational resources in the school and the community used to extend learning opportunities for students, teachers and families?**

As an enrichment to our Humanities Program, we have established a relationship with the Museum of Modern Art. Representatives from the museum come to Humanities

classes and work along with the teacher on familiarizing the students with art related to the curriculum. Students then visit the museum to view what they studied in class.

We have also made use of Brooklyn College and its intellectual facilities. Midwood students have attended lectures and seminars, as well as taken part in a series of established programs sponsored by The Ethyle Wolfe Institute. Through a joint agreement, Midwood students have access to and, in fact, use the College library, labs and swimming facility. Our students are encouraged to take part in programs which spend time overseas, as part of an international study program. Among the students who have taken part in this program are: Rose Payyapilli, who studied in Israel, Adam Schwartz, who spent a year in Germany, and Bridget Norton, who spent a year in Hungary. An extensive training and internship program has been created, focusing on Special Education students. A number of students take part in the Executive Internship Program, spending most of their day in hospitals, judicial facilities and financial institutions. A community service elective is offered in our Social Studies Department. This offers students an opportunity to serve their community while at the same time earn academic credit through attendance at seminars in the school.

## **H. Indicators of Success**

**H1. What is the overall philosophy and approach to assessment at your school? What are your assessment methods and how do these align with your educational mission and curriculum? Is there a balance among multiple methods? What questions about the assessment program is your school currently addressing as you seek continuous improvement?**

Midwood High School is committed to developing a multi-assessment system to provide a balance and equitable analysis of student achievement. Extensive work has been done by the faculty in the area of portfolio development and assessment. We were one of only three schools to receive a "variance" from the Commissioner of Education to provide staff development portfolio projects on the Sequential Math, Chemistry and Physics Regents Examinations. Foreign language classes use portfolio assessment tools. The school is attempting to move from multiple-choice, short-answer questions assessment tools to a broader based system which challenges students to develop and demonstrate their critical thinking skills. The evaluation of assessment tools is an on-going topic discussed at both Cabinet and Departmental Conferences. We are trying to develop a system that provides equity for all students, recognizing different students' learning styles.

**H2. How do you use assessment results to understand and improve student and school performance? How does your use of assessment data contribute to making issues of quality part of the everyday conversation at your school? How does data influence decision making?**

Data are used to determine mastery of skills, knowledge and concepts. In addition, data is used to analyze the effectiveness of teachers. Among the data we look at are Regents results, state competency results, Advanced Placement scores, PSAT scores, SAT scores, school wide scholarship results and individual teacher scholarship results.

Examination results are discussed by the Principal at Cabinet Meetings and by the Assistant Principals at Departmental Conferences. Staff feedback is solicited and

appropriate changes are made based upon the data. For example, when Advanced Placement results in one area had indicated a significant decline in achievement, changes were made which brought about a dramatic improvement in those results.

**a. What assessment data do school administrators and teachers use on a regular and systematic basis and for what purposes?**

See Item H2.

**b. What assessment data are communicated to parents and the community and for what purposes? What assessment data are communicated to students and how does the school ensure that students understand the standards by which their performance is judged?**

Parents and students receive report cards six times a school year which includes the following data: subject class grades, subject class attendance, school wide attendance, comments from teachers including recommendation for improvement, and statements acknowledging achievement. The beginning of each school term subject-class teachers review with students the requirements of the course, code of behavior, grading policies. A New York City and New York State Report Card is distributed annually to all parents. These reports highlight all pertinent attendance records and the school's performance in meeting state and city standards. At Parents' Association meetings, information on SAT, PSAT, LAB and other standardized test is disseminated.

**c. What specific improvements have been made in school policies and practices as a result of your analysis and use of assessment data?**

After analyzing results of writing exams, and in anticipation of new standards, we have reformulated school policy on the teaching of writing and listening skills. English teachers work with teachers of other disciplines in finding strategies to incorporate these skills into their daily lessons. Specific lessons in math and English have been infused to improve students' study and thinking skills in order to improve SAT and PSAT scores.

In mathematics, we are changing the teaching styles to meet the needs and learning styles of our students specifically targeting incoming freshman who are now taking Regents-level mathematics. The use of calculators, manipulatives and hands-on activities are integrated where appropriate throughout the mathematics curriculum.

**H3. If your school administers standardized tests developed at the national, state, or district levels to students, what are the results for the grade levels tested for each of the past FIVE years?**

	New York State Regents Exams									
	1996-97		1995-96		1994-95		1993-94		1992-93	
	%		%		%		%		%	
	Students	Passing	Students	Passing	Students	Passing	Students	Passing	Students	Passing
<b>Eng.</b>	542	88%	552	87%	556	89%	460	88%	487	89%
<b>French</b>	145	100%	137	91%	139	99%	167	99%	99	100%
<b>Span.</b>	445	95%	421	93%	349	97%	362	98%	375	97%
<b>Global Studies</b>	743	84%	654	87%	716	82%	582	89%	578	88%

<b>U.S. History</b>	554	85%	514	89%	491	84%	493	90%	481	91%
<b>Seq. Math II</b>	709	72%	578	80%	669	75%	536	80%	530	80%
<b>Chem</b>	693	74%	608	83%	612	83%	527	89%	479	77%
<b>Bio</b>	769	80%	827	64%	774	69%	674	79%	600	81%
<p>NOTE: The most recent version of the New York State Report Card indicates that the passing rate for New York State Schools on the Regents Exams are as follows:  English 66%; Second Language 70%; Biology 52%; Chemistry 43%; Global Studies 68%; U.S. History 65%.</p>										

### WESTINGHOUSE RESEARCH RESULTS SINCE 1990

<b>National Semi-Finalists</b> <b>78</b>	<b>National Top 40 Students</b> <b>5</b>	<b>National Top 10 Students</b> <b>2</b>
---	---	---

<b>SAT II - Achievement Tests</b>			
Subject	Year	# of Students	Mean
<u>English Composition</u>	1996	275	525
	1995	199	486
	1994	205	501
	1993	209	504
	1992	191	520
<u>Math Level I</u>	1996	178	599
	1995	201	577
	1994	170	575
	1993	192	578
	1992	204	580
<u>Math Level II</u>	1996	34	611
	1995	36	630
	1994	43	691
	1993	34	690
	1992	23	674
<u>Physics</u>	1996	35	615
	1995	26	622
	1994	33	608
	1993	28	623
	1992	22	609
<u>Biology</u>	1996	143	615
	1995	129	590
	1994	105	562
	1993	104	582
	1992	127	588
<u>Chemistry</u>	1996	83	603
	1995	75	569

	1994	67	603
	1993	44	583
	1992	48	593

**H4. What are the results of nonstandardized, or alternative, assessments of student performance developed at the school level?**

Midwood High School is in the forefront in using alternative assessment, in particular, portfolio assessment in science and mathematics. Our unique "variances" granted by New York State Regents allow us to incorporate portfolio grades into state examinations and, of course, into final course grades. This has changed student responsibilities and teacher strategies. Students submit up to ten items in a portfolio, in addition to standard requirements, such as homework and laboratory reports. Portfolio items include relevant biographies and histories, laboratory performance tests, a library "search" for sources, real-world applications, comments on current events, and student-made models and art. Students also re-write lab reports and make oral presentations as part of our portfolio assessment. In mathematics, students worked on problems which paralleled the curriculum and included a writing component. The results of this work were combined with the results of the State Regents Examination in order to determine an overall student grade.

**H5. How do you ensure that all subgroups of students within your school achieve at high levels? What evidence is available of decreasing disparity among any subgroups in your school?**

In June 1997, eighty percent of our graduating students received a Regents diploma. For the 1996-97 school year, seventy percent of all graduates received a Regents diploma. See item B 6

**H6. For high schools only: How have your students performed on PSAT, SAT and/or ACT college entrance examinations over the past five years?**

<u>SAT Scores</u>				
Year	No. Students Tested	% of Cohort Class Tested	Mean Scores	
			Verbal	Math
1996	574	65%	529	539
1995	535	67%	510	523
1994	541	74%	514	527
1993	532	68%	523	529
1992	514	66%	530	531

<u>PSAT Scores</u>				
Year	No. of Students	% of Cohort Class Tested	Mean Scores	
			Verbal	Math
1996	491	49%	50.3	51.9
1995	N/A			
1994	N/A			
1993	369	45%	44.5	49.7



1992	333	43%	43.5	49.0
------	-----	-----	------	------

**H7. What were the students who graduated in Spring 1996 doing as a September 1997?**

High Schools: Graduating class size	<u>537</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>94%</u>
Enrolled in a community college (2-year college)	<u>5%</u>
Enrolled in a vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>1%</u>

**H8. What qualitative and quantitative evidence is available of effective overall school performance?**

- a. What was your school s record for the past five years in the following areas which may serve as quantitative indicators of school climate and engagement?

Year	<u>Overall School Performance</u>			
	Daily Student Attendance	Student Dropout Rate	Teacher Attendance	Teacher Turnover Rate
1996-97	91.9%	> 1%	94%	> 1%
1995-96	91.1%	> 1%	94%	> 1%
1994-95	93.2%	> 1%	93%	> 1%
1993-94	91.8%	> 1%	92%	> 1%
1992-93	92.6%	> 1%	94%	> 1%

- b. What are the results of any surveys conducted by the school to measure the school climate and/or stakeholder satisfaction?

Although no formal surveys are taken, visitors to Midwood High School are continually impressed by the positive atmosphere of the school. Students are in their classes and teachers are teaching. The halls are quiet. The Deans' Office and officers from the Division of School Safety ensure a safe, secure environment. Students carry photo identification cards to help maintain security. Monthly meetings with the school Safety Committee and with students on the Consultative Council have always commended Midwood's efforts to afford students and staff a safe environment. In addition, Midwood has an excellent Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution Program. The 6,000 parents who applied to have their children admitted to Midwood are another indicator of the positive climate the school has created.

- c. What was your school s record for the past five years in the areas of school safety, discipline, and drug prevention?

Midwood High School is regarded as a safe, secure school. Students are expected to follow the Chancellor's Code of Discipline, as well as the school's rules. The Deans are responsible for maintaining discipline. Teachers are

encouraged to refer those students who do not meet these standards. Disciplinary actions are taken in a timely and appropriate manner. In addition to Midwood's Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution Program, Midwood has a SPARK Program that educates and counsels students in drug and alcohol prevention. For the 1996-97 school year, the Division of School Safety reported only forty nine serious incidents at our school of over 3,800 students.

**H7. Which awards received by your school, staff, or students are most indicative of school success?**

Recognition of success in our school has been reflected in many ways.

- In the 1997 National Westinghouse Science Research Competition, one of our students Rose Payyapilli finished among to top ten winners in the nation
- In the 1997 Westinghouse Program six Midwood students were selected as National Semi-finalists. This placed our school, for the fourth year in a row, in the top ten schools in America in terms of Westinghouse Awards

Members of the Social Studies Department have won several grants for summer study. These grants include--Fulbright Awards, National Endowment for the Humanities Awards and Japan Foundation Awards. Mark Willner, the Department Chairman, was chosen for New York State's highest social studies award in 1997 (Distinguish Social Studies Educator). He also won the Yavner Award for teaching about the Holocaust and other violations of human rights, in 1995. In addition, he was selected as the Outstanding Social Studies Supervisor in 1991

- In the English Department, Japan Foundation Awards have been won by Monica Agor and Edith Roberts. Wendy Guida and Eugene Resnick, of the Social Studies Department, won awards for study in the Humanities. In addition, Rachel Axinn won a grant for study at Harvard University.
- Midwood students have been very successful in several competitive ventures held in New York City. Among these are the following: Lincoln/Douglas Debates, Mock Trial and Moot Court Competitions, Science Fairs and contests dealing with Women's History, the Holocaust.
- See Part III Summary for additional awards won by students during the 1996-97 school year.

## **I. Previously Recognized Schools**

**I1. What changes and improvements have taken place since the school was last recognized?**

We are proud of the fact that we have countered two disturbing trends in secondary education:

- We have attracted students to a public school, whereas statistics show many families leaving public schools.
- We have attracted middle-class students to an urban high school, whereas

- nationally, the middle-class seems to be fleeing urban areas.
- We began a model for establishing high school articulation with a major college.
- We created an Interdisciplinary Humanities Program, Law Program and Social Science Research Program.
- The Latin Program was expanded
- Italian was added to the curriculum
- New Advanced Placement courses were introduced including: Psychology, Environmental Science and Statistics
- The extracurricular activities were enhanced through the addition of an annual school play, Kwanza celebration, Asian New Year celebration, International Festival, Black Heritage Alliance celebration of Black History Month, Haitian-Creole Culture Club
- Technology enhancement has taken place particularly with the introduction of the Internet as student research tool
- A Conflict Resolution/Peer Negotiation Program has been introduced
- Students participated in both 1992 and 1996 Presidential Inauguration Ceremonies in Washington D.C.
- All students are now receiving Regents-level instruction in mathematics
- All science courses are laboratory-based and taught on a Regents level

**I2. Have you had any interactions with other schools to share some of your successful strategies and practices? If so, please elaborate.**

Faculty members from schools such as Science Skills High School, Erasmus Campus High Schools, Tilden High School, DeWitt Clinton High School, Fort Hamilton High School, John Jay High School and John Dewey High School, have worked with our faculty on numerous projects. Teachers and administrators visited our research programs, our advanced courses, finding strategies to challenge students and to set up mentorships with outside agencies and institutions. In addition, we have worked with John Dewey High School in conjunction with Brooklyn College on a program that introduced students to education as a profession.

The Principal of Midwood High School has worked with the Principal of Tilden High School and the Principal of the Erasmus Campus High School in an on-going effort to share ideas and strengthen all three schools. A team of teachers from DeWitt Clinton High School visited Midwood High School to examine the success of our research programs. Our Assistant Principal for Health & Physical Education services as New York City's PSAL Football Commissioner.